

2 November 1983

KOPPEL: To represent the United States on a day when it is being denounced by 108 nations must count as one of the more trying experiences in an ambassador's career, but joining us live this evening nevertheless, a little bruised perhaps, but still apparently unbowed, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick. Well, they rejected you, they rejected your arguments, they rejected the United States' arguments, and what does that mean? JEANE KIRKPATRICK (U.S. Ambassador to the UN): Well, it means that that's the way the world is. That's where we are, and that's where the United Nations is. We acted with the nations of the Eastern Caribbean Association, and I think we acted lawfully and correctly, let me say. Uh, do you know, it's one of those typical UN events in which a great many countries and their representatives say one thing privately and another thing publicly, and you get a public outcome that looks as though the United States is less isolationist than isolated. And that's the problem that we have to deal with in the world, and especially in the United Nations.

KOPPEL: What are they saying to you privately? KIRKPATRICK: Privately they...

KOPPEL: And how many 'theys' are there? KIRKPATRICK: Well, there are a lot of 'theys,' and privately they say that they think it was a marvelous thing that we did, and, uh, that it will, uh, have good effects all over the world, and they're glad we did it, and, uh, that they have to do this and they hope we'll understand.

KOPPEL: That's enough to make you stop believing in the tooth fairy, isn't it? KIRKPATRICK: Something like that.

KOPPEL: Are you, are you angry, are you disillusioned, or didn't you have many illusions left? KIRKPATRICK: Well, I didn't have many illusions left about the UN, that is, about the way nations behave, including our very good friends, actually in the UN. We, uh, I keep saying this, you know, I've said it here, too, the UN is a political system. Countries don't, generally speaking, vote on the merits of the case. They vote as members of a party making calculations about the politics of the UN's system, and we're a country without a party in that system. We, we are frequently isolated in the UN. It's been the case, not just since Ronald Reagan was, became president and I went to the UN, but for a long time before that.

KOPPEL: Ambassador Kirkpatrick, I've gotta ask you, I mean, one can either take the position that, 'Well, this is the way the UN is and it doesn't have any real effect, so let's not worry about it too much,' in which case, one has to ask, 'Why bother at all?' Or one has to take the position that it does matter very much, we're democratic, I mean, we're a democracy, we believe in the rule of the majority, and the majority certainly spoke, the global majority, certainly spoke with a clarion-clear voice at the UN today. Well, which is it? I mean, do we believe in it or...

KIRKPATRICK: Well, we don't just believe in the rule of the majority, let's be clear about that, neither in the UN nor in our own country. We believe in, you know, in a lot of things. We believe in the rule of law. We believe in democracy. We believe in freedom, human rights. We believe in minority rights as well as majority rule. Uh, let me just say, though, I personally am always intensely bothered when there is a resounding majority against us and our positions, which we take because we think are right, in the UN. It's happened to us a good many times before, I would insist. More often than not, we turn out to be isolated with Israel, in defense of Israel. This time Israel chose to be isolated with us, in defense of us, and we appreciate that.

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KOPPEL: And what does it all mean, I mean, now that it's all done? So the undersecretary goes over to Grenada, he does his fact-finding, he comes back, and practically speaking... KIRKPATRICK: Well, you know, we give him, uh, support, cooperation. Uh, we help arrange for the landing of his plane. I said to him he could enjoy the sweet smell of success if he tried to promote U.S. troop withdrawal from Grenada, unlike his unhappy experiences in promoting troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, which he hasn't made much progress in efforts for more than a year.